



Review Article

ROLE OF *AGNIDUSHTI* IN PATHOGENESIS OF DISEASES

Lanjewar Swati Rajkumar^{1*}, Gurmule Rajni Kamlakar²

¹Assistant Professor, Dept. of Rognidan Avum Vikriti Vigyan, L.N.Ayurved College & Hospital, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India.

²Assistant Professor, Dept. of Rachana Sharir Mahatma Gandhi Ayurveda College, Hospital & Research Centre, Salod (H), Wardha, Maharashtra, India.

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ABSTRACT

According to fundamentals of Ayurveda *Agni* has an important role in the physiological functioning of body. *Agni* is broadly described in three types *Jatharagni*, *Bhutagni*, *Dhatvagni*. The *Jatharagni* is *Param-Sukshma* and a unit which transforms of *Aahara* (food substances) into various forms which can be easily assimilated by our body. When it is in good quality it covert ingested food into absorbable form which gives energy to each and every tissue of the body. Therefore all components present in own body are depending upon *Agni* directly or indirectly. It helps in the balance condition of the three *Doshas* or humors namely *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*. As in classics of Ayurveda all diseases are caused due to *Mandagni* (hampered function of *Agni*) - "*Roga Sarvepi Mandagnou*". If *Agni* becomes hampers, it will result into improper formation of *Rasadhatu* and consequently *Uttorotar Dhatu* formation hampers. Once the *Srotus* becomes abnormal, it brings abnormality in normal *Dhatu* by not transporting to required destination, so *Srotus* vitiates other *Srotus* and *Dhatu*, *Dhatu* vitiates other *Dhatu*, and for all these imbalanced *Dosha* are responsible. *Agnidushti* (Improper functioning of *Agni*) causes imbalance in the level of *Tridosha* which results in pathogenesis of various disease. That's why *Agnidushti* play an important role in pathogenesis of various diseases.

*Address for correspondence

Dr. Lanjewar Swati Rajkumar

Assistant Professor

Dept. of Rognidan Avum Vikriti

Vigyan

L. N. Ayurved College and

Hospital, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India.

Email :

srlanjewar1990@gmail.com

Mob: 8888871902/ 9730517624

INTRODUCTION

In the universe the difference between *Achetan* (Non-living) and *Chetan* (Living) is due to the presence of *Agni Tatwa* in the living thing. In Ayurveda only because of *Agni* ingested food is get digested, absorbed and assimilated, which is unavoidable for the maintenance of life.

Ayurveda considers that *Dehagni* is the cause of *Ayu* (life), *Varna* (complexion), *Bala* (strength), *Swasthya* (health), *Utsaha* (Enthusiasm), *Chayapachya* (nourishment and growth), *Prabha* (lusture), *Oja*, *Teja* (energy) and *Prana* (life energy).^[1]

About the importance of *Agni*, *Acharya Charaka* has mentioned that after stoppage of the function of *Agni*, the individual dies, and when the *Agni* of an individual is *Sama*, then that person would be absolutely healthy and would lead a long,

happy, healthy life. But, if the *Agni* of a person is vitiates, the whole metabolism in his body would be disturbed, resulting in ill health and disease. Hence, *Agni* is said to be the vital source (*Mool*) of life.^[2]

According to *Charaka*, the constituent parts of the body, if further divided into the *Dhatu Paramanu* (atoms), are sure to become innumerable, as such cells or atoms are exceedingly numerous, very minute and ultrasensory. In the *Sanyog* (conjunction) and *Vibhag* (disjunction) of *Dhatu Paramanu*, the activating factors are *Vata* and the nature of action.^[3] According to modern medicine, metabolic processes, division and multiplication are going on in all cells of our body from birth till death. The cell is the functional unit of the body. Thus, based on *Acharya Charaka*, the

cells can be considered as “*Dhatu Paramanus*.” For these constant processes in all cells, a biological energy is constantly essential, without which the survival of our body will be quite impossible. The same biological energy is provided by *Agni* in Ayurveda.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To study the concept of *Agni* in details.
2. To study the concept of *Agnidushti* in pathogenesis of diseases.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The main Ayurvedic texts used in this study are *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Astang Sangraha*, *Ashtang Hridaya*, *Madhav Nidan* and commentaries on these. Also referred some text books on *Rognidan avum Vikruti Vigyan*, and *Sharir Kriya* and searched various research article related to the topic.

Review and Discussion

Types of *Agni*

Agni varies in various classical Ayurvedic texts, as shown below

- *Charaka* has mentioned about 13 *Agnis*. *Jatharagni* - 1, *Bhutagni* - 5, *Dhatvagni* - 7 (*Cha.Chi.15/38*).^[4]
- According to *Acharya Sushruta*, five types of *Agnis* are illustrated, viz. *Pachakagni*, *Ranjakagni*, *Alochakagni*, *Sadhakagni* and *Bhrajakagni*. However, there is an indirect reference of five *Bhutagnis* underlying in the brief description made to the transformation of food stuff. (*Sh.Su.21/10*).^[5]
- *Vagbhata* has described different types *Agni*, viz.- *Bhutagnis* - 5, *Dhatvagnis* - 7, *Dhoshagni* - 3 and *Malagni* - 3. (*A. Hr. Sha. 3/70*)^[6]
- *Sharangadhara* has recognized five *pittas* only (*Pachak*, *Bhrajak*, *Ranjak*, *Alochaka* and *Sadhak*) (*Sha.Sa.Pu.Kh.-5/47-50*).^[7]
- *Bhavamishra* has followed *Acharya Charaka* and *Vagbhata* (*Bh.Pu.Kh.-3/169,180*).^[8]

Agni is innumerable because of its presence in each and every *Dhatu Paramanu* (cell) of the body.^[9]

Broadly *Agni* has been divided into 13 types according to the function and site of action. These are:

1. ***Jatharagni***: one *Agni* present in the *Pakwaamashaya*.
2. ***Bhutagni***: Five *Agni* from *Panchamahabhuta* (five basic elements).
3. ***Dhatvagni***: Seven *Agni* present, one in each of the seven *Dhatu*s.

Jatharagni

Jatharagni is chief among all types of *Agni* because functions of *Bhutangi* and *Dhatvagni* depend on it. Aggravation or diminution of *Jatharagni* results in aggravation or diminution of *Bhutagni* and *Dhatvagni*.^[10]

According to *Acharya Sushruta*, there is no existence of any other *Agni* in the body without *Pitta*, because when there is increased digestion and combustion in the body due to *Ushna Guna* of *Pitta*, the treatment is like *Agni*.^[11]

Acharya Marichi has also emphasized that the *Agni* present in the *Pitta* gives good or bad results when it is normal or vitiated. *Chakrapani* has commented on “*Pittantargatta*,” that the function of *Pitta* inside the body is not combustion but its work is to provide heat of *Agni*.^[12]

Acharya Dalhana also state that “*Teja Patham Jatharanalmargam*” i.e. *Agnivaha Srotas* is present.^[13] *Jatharagni* helps in the proper functioning of *Bhutangi* and *Dhatvagni*.

Bhutagni

Bhutagni is the one that is present in a basic element (*Bhutas*). There are five *Agnis* in each of the five basic elements, namely - *Parthiva* (earth), *Apya* (water), *Tejas* (*Agni*), *Vayavya* (*Vayu*) and *Nabhasa* (*Akash*).

Each and every cell in our body is composed of the five *Mahabhutas* or five basic elements. Naturally, each cell (*Dhatu Paramanu*) consists of these five *Bhutagni* also.^[14] All the nutrients in this world that we eat also consist of the same five basic elements with their respective *Agni* or bio energies. Thus, they are completely similar with respect to the five basic elements with their *Bhutagni* in our body cells as well in the entire outside nutrient, which we ingest for the nutrition of our body. *Acharya Charaka* has mentioned that the five *Bhutagni* digest their own part of the element present in the food materials. After the digestion of food by the *Bhutagni*, digested materials containing the elements and qualities similar to each *Bhutas* nourish their own specific *Bhautika* elements of the body.^[15] These *Bhutagnis* act after the *Jatharagni*, acting on the food and causing their disintegration.

Dhatvagni

All the seven *Dhatu*s (seven element tissues of the body) contain their own *Agni* to metabolize the nutrient materials supplied to them through their own *Srotas*.

1. *Rasagni* present in the *Rasa Dhatu*
2. *Raktagni* present in the *Rakta Dhatu*
3. *Mamsagni* present in the *Mamsa Dhatu*

4. *Medagni* present in the *Meda Dhatu*
5. *Asthyagni* present in the *Asthi Dhatu*
6. *Majjagni* present in the *Majja Dhatu*
7. *Shukragni* present in the *Shukra Dhatu*

Each *Dhatvagni* or the bio energy present in each *Dhatu* synthesizes and transforms the essential *Rasa Dhatu* required for that particular *Dhatu* or cell from the basic nutrients present in the *Anna Rasa* or essence of the diet that we consume. Each *Dhatvagni* has got a speciality to synthesize and transform the constituents suitable to its particular *Dhatu*. This action is a sort of selective action. *Acharya Charaka* has mentioned the fact that that the seven *Dhatus* that are a support of the body contain their own *Agni*, and by their own *Agni* they digest and transform the materials supplied to them to make the substances alike to them for assimilation and nourishment.^[16]

All these process on *Aahara* by these *Bhutagni* and *Dhatvagni* cause only because of *Jatharagni*. If *Jatharagni* gets hampered then it also hampered other *Agni's* function. *Aahara Parinat Sukshma Rasa* gets distributed all over the body with the help of *Vyan Vata*. If this *Aahara Ras* is *Apakva* or *Aparinat* due improper function of *Jatharagni*, results in *Ama Dosh*.^[17]

Ama:

Impaired function of *Agni* results in the production of *Ama*. As *Acharyas* states various types of *Agni* that means impaired function of any type of *Agni* i.e. *Jatharagni*, *Bhutagni* or *Dhatvagni*.^[18] *Ama* leads to various symptoms which causes diseases.

Srotorodha (Obstruction in *Srotas* / body channels), *Balabhramsha* (decreased physical and immunological strength), *Gaurav* (feeling of heaviness), *Anilmudhata* (decreased activity of *Vata Dosh*), *Alasya* (laziness), *Apakti* (indigestion), *Nisthivata* (repeated spitting due to increased salivation), *Malasanga* (inadequate removal of wastes from the body), *Aruchi* (Anorexia) and *Klama* (exhaustion without any type of work) – these all the symptoms of *Ama* stated by *Acharya Vagbhata*.^[19]

Role of Agni in Pathogenesis of Diseases

According to all above the review healthy state of body and disease condition is depends on *Agni*. According to *Acharya Vagbhata* all diseases can cause due to *Mandagni* i.e. hampered functions of *Agni*.^[20] In *Sarvangsundar* commentary *Arundatta* explains *Sarvaroga* means *Jwaratisaradi Roga* i.e. *Roga* that cause due to *Rasa Dhatudushti*.^[21]

Agni processed on *Aahara* to get nutrition for body and forms *Aahararas Dhatu* which gets

circulates simultaneously and continuously all over the body with the help of *Vyana Vata*. As earlier we studied that this *Rasdhatus* helps in the formation of other *Uttarottar Dhatu* formation if there is any *Srotorodha* (obstruction in *Srotas*) or abnormality present, then it will vitiated other *Srotas* which results help in the formation of disease. Once the *Srotas* becomes abnormal, it brings abnormality in normal *Dhatu* by not transporting to required destinations; this is because abnormality in *Srotas*. *Srotas* vitiates other *Srotas*, *Dhatus* vitiates other *Dhatus*, and for all these happenings disturbed *Doshas* are responsible. *Doshas* get aggravated by the hampered functions of *Agni*.

Certain terminologies used in Ayurveda while explaining the pathogenesis, signs and symptoms etc are *Dushyatagn*, *Agnisadan*, *Mandagni*, *Nastagni*, *Durbalagni*, *Atyagni*, *Upahatagni*, *Hatwagni*, *Agninsha*, *Sheetagni*, *Teekshnagni*, *Vishamagni*, *Alpagni*, it indicates the importance in the disease process.^[24]

All *Acharyas* gives importance to *Agni Pariksha* in the evaluation and therapeutic management of diseases; it shows the importance of *Agnidushti* in the pathogenesis of diseases.

CONCLUSION

Swasthya (healthy state of body) and *Rogawastha* are entirely depending on *Agni*. Consumed *Aahara* undergo metabolic transformation process with the help of *Jatharagni*, *Bhutagni*, *Dhatvagni*. If any type of *Agni* gets vitiates; it vitiates the other *Agni*, and ultimately it disturbed or vitiates the *Doshas*. So we can conclude that *Agnidushti* has prime importance in the genesis of diseases. Hence we should protect *Agni* by proper intake of *Aahara* and *Vihara* which will gives us healthy and joyful life span.

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